

1,001 FACTS THAT WILL

SCARE THE **S#*T**



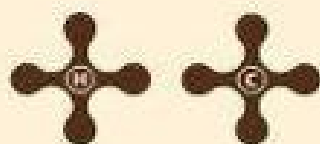
OUT OF YOU

The Ultimate Bathroom Reader



Front to back
not your
regular
trivia book.

Written by
Cary McNeal



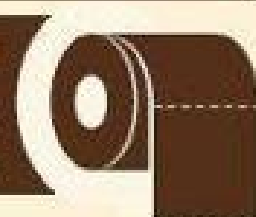
FACT: Office desks have 400 times more bacteria than toilet seats. *So, be safe and eat your lunch on a toilet instead of at your desk.*

FACT: The acid in your stomach is so powerful that it can dissolve a razor blade in less than a week. *You should still be careful when eating them, though.*

FACT: Of people who use personal ads for dating, thirty-five percent are married. *Hey, we all forget things sometimes.*

FACT: A person can live without eating for weeks, but will only survive eleven days without sleep. *People around those who haven't slept, however, will only survive a day or two.*

A hilarious collection of little-known facts about
THE WORLD THAT ARE WEIRD, CREEPY, DISGUSTING,
AND SURE TO FRIGHTEN THE BEJEEZUS OUT OF YOU



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Avon, Massachusetts

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Acknowledgments

Writing any book is a massive undertaking, and no author does it alone even though you certainly feel alone when it's 4:30 on a beautiful sunny spring afternoon and you're stuck inside banging your head against the desk as you try to come up with something funny to say about people being beheaded or bugs that eat human flesh while all your friends and family are outside somewhere having fun without you, usually accompanied by alcohol.

Still, a lot of people made this book happen, and I need to thank them. Especially if I want to get hired again. Those people are:

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My wife Paige and daughter Keaton for loving me no matter what.

Introduction

*The world is a
frightening place.*

But you already knew that; you read it in the paper, hear about it from friends, see it with your own eyes every time you turn on the TV to watch bad singers or dancers subject themselves to abuse from judges with more talent than the contestants, or see a web video of a teenager shooting a bottle rocket from his ass for amusement, or get plowed from behind in your car by another driver who was texting “LMAO” to his friends instead of noticing that the light had turned red and you had stopped.

If random violence doesn't get you, cancer will. If cancer doesn't get you, global warming will. If global warming doesn't get you, bullet ants will. Or botflies. Or lightning. Or tsunamis. Or the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Or Fijian headhunters. Or just normal everyday activities like drinking water, eating an orange, breathing the air, or having sex with a goat.

Yes, we are in deep doo-doo. You should be scared to death, right?

Wrong.

Okay, sure, this is a book of scary facts, and the more you read, the more afraid you are likely to be. I wouldn't be doing my job if you weren't. But if forewarned is forearmed, then the more you know, the safer you'll feel, even if it's a false sense of security since you can't do a thing about most of what you read here. But who cares, as long as you feel better?

If not—if this information scares the shit out of you—that's okay, too. You're probably reading this on the crapper, anyway, and what better place to be scared shitless? Isn't that the idea, to be shitless? At least you aren't befouling a nice pair of pants. I'm also keeping you regular. You're welcome.

While I'm scaring you, though, I also hope to make you laugh. There's
a joke after every fact, for chrissakes. Do you have any idea how hard it is
to make jokes about things like a guy getting the wrong testicle removed
during surgery? Okay, bad example. But you get the idea: you should
laugh when you read this book. If you don't, either you have no sense of
humor or I need a new career. I'm too old to start a new career, so the
blame falls squarely on you.

Be warned also that you might be offended by this book when I make
fun of someone or something you love. Butts of my jokes include doctors,
dentists, Latvians, Texans, kids, pets, Deadheads, mothers-in-law, Death
Row inmates, Catholics, Pentecostals, Sammy Hagar, Lyle Lovett, the
French, Tennessee, fast-food employees, and numerous other people,
places and things. I also make ample fun of myself, my wife, my
(fictitious) sex life, my home state of Georgia, and other things I hold near
and dear. So unbunch your panties and laugh a little. Even you, Sammy
Hagar.

Far more offensive than my jokes are the ridiculous things that occur in
this world on a daily basis, so read these facts and be afraid, be amused, be
annoyed, be aghast, be whatever. You already bought the book and
already got paid, so I don't really care. Sorry, just being honest. (Sort of.)

And remember: front to back, and keep wiping until the TP is clean.

Your pal,

Cary McNeal

CHAPTER 1

Are You
Gonna
Eat That?

*The Ugly Truth
about Food
and Drink*

1

FACT : Bottled drinking water has been marketed as being cleaner and more pure than ordinary tap water, but, in a recent study, a third of bottled water showed significant **chemical or bacterial contamination**, including arsenic, nitrates, carcinogenic compounds, and coliform bacteria. *Probably the bottom third; that kind of stuff tends to sink.*

- › “Bottled Water: Pure Drink or Pure Hype?” National Resources Defense Council www.nrdc.org.

2

FACT : Bottled water is rarely tested for purity. An Environmental Working Group study found that ten popular brands were riddled with **chemical pollutants and bacteria**, some as high as tap water. *Hey, you wanted low prices.*



- › “FDA Should Adopt EPA Tap Water Health Goals for Bottled Water,” news release Environmental Working Group, November 19, 2008, www.ewg.org.
- › “Bottled Water: Pure Drink or Pure Hype?” National Resources Defense Council www.nrdc.org.

3

FACT : While the results of tap water contamination tests are made public, manufacturers of bottled water **do not divulge** their test results. *Chalk it up to the protection of trade secrets. Every brand of bottled water has its own proprietary blend of pathogens, contaminants, and waste that give the product its uniquely refreshing taste.*

- › “FDA Should Adopt EPA Tap Water Health Goals for Bottled Water,” news release Environmental Working Group, November 19, 2008, www.ewg.org.

4

FACT : According to government and industry estimates, almost **40 percent** of bottled water is ordinary tap water, often with no additional treatment. *“Additional treatment” = changing out the lawn hose before filling a new batch.*

- › “FDA Should Adopt EPA Tap Water Health Goals for Bottled Water,” news release Environmental Working Group, November 19, 2008, www.ewg.org.
- › “Bottled Water: Pure Drink or Pure Hype?” National Resources Defense Council www.nrdc.org.

5

FACT : Almost **99 percent** of imported food is never inspected by the FDA or USDA, the two agencies responsible for protecting Americans from tainted products. *They’re busy testing bottled water.*

- › Andrew Bridges, “Imported Food Rarely Inspected,” USA Today, April 16, 2007, www.usatoday.com.

6

FACT : One pound of peanut butter can contain up to **150 bug fragments and 5 rodent hairs**. *Up to 150. That means there could only be 120–130. Whew! I was almost disgusted there for a second.*

- › Stephanie Bailey, “Bug Food: Edible Insects,” University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Entomology Department, www.ca.uky.edu.
- › “Food Defect Action Levels,” U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, last updated November 2005, www.cfsan.fda.gov.

7

FACT : One in five office coffee mugs contains **fecal bacteria and E. coli**, which can cause diarrhea, food poisoning, and infections. *Not surprising, since most office coffee tastes like shit. Related fact: Three of five office coffee mugs feature sayings that are meant to be funny but aren’t, like “Bean m*

- › Stephanie Muller, “Stay Healthy with Tips from a Germ Freak,” Health Communication Quarterly, October 19, 2005, www.usjt.com.
 - › “Dr. Germ,” Information for News Media, University of Arizona College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, February 17, 2005, www.cals.arizona.edu.
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8

FACT : Vegetarians beware: many low-fat and nonfat yogurts and sweets contain gelatin, which is made from **animal tendons, ligaments, and bones**. *You’d think the crunching would give it away. But it must be drowned out by the sound of all those vegetarians patting themselves on the back for being vegetarians.*

- › Ayami Chin, “Gross Facts You May Have Never Wanted to Know,” Associated Content, May 24, 2007, www.associatedcontent.com.
 - › Ernest R. Vieira and Louis J. Ronsivalli, Elementary Food Science, 4th ed. (Springer, 1999), 237.
 - › Audrey Ensminger, Foods and Nutrition Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. (CRC Press, 1994), 1057.
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9

FACT : Fining is a process used by most wineries to **remove particles and impurities** from wine. Typical fining agents include isinglass (a collagen from sturgeon bladders), gelatin, and ox blood. *Whatever impurities are removed by fining, are they worse than fish urine, animal bones and blood?*

- › Thor Iversen, “Ladybug Marmalade,” Stuff Boston, January 12, 2009, www.stuffboston.com.
 - › Emile Peynaud, Knowing and Making Wine, trans. Alan Spencer, 2nd ed. (Wiley-IEEE, 1984), 291–294.
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10

FACT : Even when grapes are harvested by hand, some **insects wind up** in the pickers' basket. Workers simply don't have time to inspect every grape individually as they work. *Consider it fiber. We all need fiber.*

- › Thor Iverson, "Ladybug Marmalade," Stuff Boston, January 12, 2009, www.stuffboston.com.
- › G. L. Creasy, G. I. Creasey, and Leroy L. Creasy, *Grapes* (CABI, 2009), 180.

11

FACT : Most wines are made from grapes harvested by machines that scythe through everything in their path, including **sticks, insects, rodents, and even larger mammals**, which can make their way into the end product. This is known to wine growers as MOG, or "material other than grapes." *MOG also stands for "Mother of God, I think that was a hoof."*

- › Thor Iverson, "Ladybug Marmalade," Stuff Boston, January 12, 2009, www.stuffboston.com.
- › Ronald S. Jackson, *Wine Science: Principles and Applications*, 3rd ed. (Academic Press, 2008), 335.
- › John Smith, "Grapes: MOG," Oakstone Winery, www.oakstone-winery.com.

12

FACT : In 2001, the Ontario, Canada wine region was hit by an infestation of ladybugs, which infiltrated many area wineries. When agitated, ladybugs secrete a **strong, foul liquid** containing pyrazine, a flavor similar to rancid peanuts—and one that was perceptible in numerous wines of that vintage. *Rancid Pinot Noir and Bugjolais, for example.*

- › Thor Iverson, "Ladybug Marmalade," Stuff Boston, January 12, 2009, www.stuffboston.com.
 - › "Ladybug, Ladybug, Get Outta My Wine," Canadian Broadcasting Centre News, January 2003, www.cbc.ca.
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13

FACT : Molds are tiny organisms with thread-like roots that burrow deep into the foods where they grow. While some molds are safe, like those used to make certain kinds of cheeses—Roquefort, Gorgonzola, Brie—most molds are **unsafe for consumption**, as they can contain *listeria*, *brucella*, *salmonella* and *E. coli*. *Mold is also used to make Frumunda, a briny, piquant cheese from the Netherlands and the regions of Crackoslovokia.*

- › Katherine Zeratsky, “Moldy cheese: Is it unsafe to eat?” Nutrition and Healthy Eating, Expert Answers, Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.com.

14

FACT : **Bacteria multiply** between temperatures of 40° and 140°F, so be careful when reheating food in slow-cookers or chafing dishes. *This is good news for those who like fast-food drive-thrus—the French fries there are usually around 34°F.*

- › Katherine Zeratsky, “Food Poisoning: How long can you safely keep leftovers?” Nutrition and Healthy Eating, Expert Answers, Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.com.

15

FACT : Parasitic round worms such as *Anisakis simplex*, frequently found in fish, can lead to **anisakiasis in humans**, a condition marked by severe abdominal and gastric pain, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal distention, which can last for months. *I think my wife’s been cooking with those.*

- › R. Wootten and D. C. Cann, “Round Worms in Fish,” Food and Agriculture Association of the United Nations, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, Torry Research Station, www.fao.org.
- › Sari Edelstein and others, Food and Nutrition at Risk in America: Food Insecurity, Biotechnology, Food Safety, and Bioterrorism (Jones & Bartlett, 2008), 28.

16

FACT : Long a staple of the American diet and U.S. economy, corn is a **high-carbohydrate, high-glycemic food** that fattens up cattle and does the same to humans who consume it in excess. *you don’t believe me, visit Nebraska.*

› Melissa Diane Smith, “Corn Fed and Fat: The American Problem That is Spreading to Other Countries,” News & Notes, Against the Grain Nutrition, July 31, 2000
www.againstthegrainnutrition.com

› Audrey Ensminger, Foods and Nutrition Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. (CRC Press, 1994).

17

FACT : Corn is in almost everything we consume. It is the primary food for the chicken, pigs, and cows we eat; the source of corn oils found in many snack foods, margarines, and baked goods; used to make high fructose corn syrup, the most prevalent, cheapest and, some believe, **most hazardous of all sweeteners**; and the source of numerous food additives. *As a result, corn is found in things that come out of our bodies, too. Like the one you’re working on right now.*



› Melissa Diane Smith, “Corn Fed and Fat: The American Problem That is Spreading to Other Countries,” News & Notes, Against the Grain Nutrition, July 31, 2000
www.againstthegrainnutrition.com.

› Audrey Ensminger, Foods and Nutrition Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. (CRC Press, 1994).

18

FACT : Beef cattle evolved to survive on grass but are regularly fed corn, which has disastrous effects on their digestive systems, requiring a **constant regimen of antibiotics** to keep them healthy. *Th*

antibiotics are clearly working; cows digest things just fine. About every two to three minutes, in fact

› Michael Pollan, “When a Crop Becomes King,” New York Times, July 19, 2002, www.michaelpollan.com.

› Danielle Nierenberg and Lisa Mastny, Happier Meals: Rethinking the Global Meat Industry (Worldwatch Institute, 2005), 25.

19

FACT : Many environmentalists believe salmon farms could have a catastrophic effect on the world’s wild salmon populations. Concentrations of solid-waste and nitrogens from farmed pens can **poison marine life**, and many researchers fear that salmon farm escapees could soon overrun and decimate wild stocks. As of 1999, a million salmon had escaped from farms in Puget Sound and British Columbia alone. *Although farmers use dogfish to track the escapees, most ultimately find their way to freedom. Fish that are caught are returned to the farms, where they face intense grilling over an open flame for 8–10 minutes.*

› David F. Arnold and William (FRW) Cronan, The Fishermen’s Frontier: People and Salmon in Southeast Alaska (University of Washington Press, 2008), 187.

20

FACT : Peanut allergies afflict an estimated 4 million Americans, and can be life-threatening. Almost **half of annual emergency room visits** and two-thirds of deaths due to anaphylaxis are the result of peanut allergies. *On the bright side, if you’re a peanut allergy sufferer, you won’t have to worry about all those bug fragments and rat hair in peanut butter.*

› “Of Mice And Peanuts: A New Mouse Model For Peanut Allergy,” Science News, Science Daily, Jan. 14, 2009, www.sciencedaily.com.

› Kalidas Shetty and others, Food Biotechnology, 2nd ed. (CRC Press, 2006), 970.

21

FACT : Peaches, apples, nectarines, and strawberries are among the **top six “dirtiest” foods** according to investigations by the Environmental Working Group. More than 90 percent of samples of these fruits tested positive for detectable pesticides, even after being rinsed or peeled. *What, that two second splash of cold water didn’t wash off all the chemicals?*

- › “Shopper’s Guide to Pesticides,” The Environmental Working Group, www.foodnews.org.

22

FACT : Independent studies show that bell peppers, celery, kale, carrots, lettuce, and potatoes are the vegetables most likely to **expose consumers to pesticides**, despite being rinsed or peeled. *Bell peppers, celery, carrots, lettuce, and potatoes are also the foods most likely to expose family and friends to your lethal flatulence. Who the hell eats kale?*

- › “Shopper’s Guide to Pesticides,” The Environmental Working Group, www.foodnews.org.

23

FACT : Red-colored grocery items like fruit punch and strawberry yogurt are often dyed with carmine, which is made from **ground-up cochineal beetles**. For some, carmine can cause severe allergic reactions and can even lead to anaphylactic shock. *That’s too bad, because eating ground-up beetles sounds really great otherwise.*

- › Daniel M. Marmion, Handbook of U.S. Colorants: Foods, Drugs, Cosmetics, and Medicinal Devices, 3rd ed. (Wiley-Interscience, 1991), 128.
- › J.B. Greig, “Cochineal Extract, Carmine, and Carminic Acid,” WHO Food Additive Series 4 Food Standards Agency, London, www.inchem.org.

24

FACT : Citrus Red No.2 is often used to give Florida oranges a brighter, more appealing hue. The same dye has been **banned for use** in food processing because studies have shown that it causes cancer. *Citrus Red No. 2 is also used at spray-on tanning spas to give customers that oh-so-life-like bright orange glow.*

- › Mike Adams, “Grocery Warning: The Seven Most Dangerous Ingredients in Conventional Foods,” (Truth Publishing LLC, 2006), Organic Consumers Association www.organicconsumers.org.

- › Elson Haas and Buck Levin, Staying Healthy with Nutrition: The Complete Guide to Diet and Nutritional Medicine, 21st ed. (Celestial Arts, 2006), 447.

25

FACT : Prior to 2007, Girl Scout cookies were made with **trans fat-filled hydrogenated oil**, though most trans fat has now been removed from the recipes. *Hold on, Sparky. They're still packed with sugar and saturated fat, so it's not a good idea to down an entire box of Tagalong's in one sitting. Even though I have. More than once. Thin Mints, too.*

- › Mike Adams, “Grocery Warning: The Seven Most Dangerous Ingredients in Conventional Foods,” (Truth Publishing LLC, 2006), Organic Consumers Association www.organicconsumers.org.

- › “Thin Mints Recipes,” Little Brownie Bakers, www.littlebrowniebakers.com.

26

FACT : A diet high in processed meats like sausage, hot dogs, and luncheon meats **increases the risk of pancreatic cancer**. Chemical reactions that occur during the preparation of these meats yield carcinogens, which could be responsible for the association. *Subway's Jared: “I ate Subway every day for a year and lost 200 pounds. And my pancreas.”*

- › Mike Adams, “Grocery Warning: The Seven Most Dangerous Ingredients in Conventional Foods,” (Truth Publishing LLC, 2006), Organic Consumers Association www.organicconsumers.org.

- › “Processed Meat Linked to Pancreatic,” Consumer Affairs, April 22, 2009 www.consumeraffairs.com.

27

FACT : Mushrooms can kill. The two species most commonly to blame in **mushroom poisonings** are

the Death Cap, which contains seven toxins and can be lethal with just one bite, and the Destroying Angel, often confused for an edible white cap mushroom. *Death Cap. Destroying Angel. Who names these things, Dr. Evil?*

- › Dahlia Rideout, “Ten Dangerous & Deadly Foods,” Divine Caroline, www.divinecaroline.com
- › Ian Robert Hall, *Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of the World* (Timber Press, 2003).

28

FACT : Think you’re avoiding monosodium glutamate (MSG) by checking product labels? You could be wrong. Food makers now **conceal MSG in packaged foods** by listing it under other names, such as autolyzed or hydrolyzed vegetable protein, torula yeast, soy extracts, yeast extract, and protein isolate. *So the next time you’re at a Chinese restaurant, instead of asking for “No MSG, please,” say, “No autolyzed or hydrolyzed vegetable protein, torula yeast, soy extracts, yeast extract and protein isolate, please.” And the waiter will still nod and smile as if the MSG wasn’t already in the food and he could remove it even if he had any intention of doing so, which he doesn’t.*

- › Mike Adams, “Grocery Warning: The Seven Most Dangerous Ingredients in Conventional Foods,” (Truth Publishing LLC, 2006), Organic Consumers Association, www.organicconsumers.org.
- › Myrna Chandler Goldstein and Mark Allan Goldstein, *Controversies in Food and Nutrition* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 13.

29

FACT : Blowfish (fugu), a delicacy in Japan and Hong Kong, contains **deadly amounts of tetrodotoxin**, a poison 500 times stronger than cyanide. Several diners die each year from blowfish consumption. *And yet, people continue to eat it. If I’m going to die from eating something, I assure you it won’t be fish. Donuts, maybe, or bacon, but not fish.*

› Jack Jackson, Complete Diving Manual (New Holland Publishers, 2005), 177.

› Robb Satterwhite, What’s What in Japanese Restaurants: A Guide to Ordering, Eating, and Enjoying, 2nd ed. (Kodansha International, 1996), 64.

30

FACT : Because they are filter-feeders, shellfish can accumulate **high levels of toxins** from the algae they consume. Eat enough of them, and you could die. *Lobster and shrimp: two more things I’d rather die from eating than blowfish.*

› Dahlia Rideout, “Ten Dangerous & Deadly Foods,” Divine Caroline, www.divinecaroline.com

› “Various Shellfish-Associated Toxins,” Bad Bug Book, U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, www.cfsan.fda.gov.

31

FACT : Rhubarb leaves contain a high concentration of oxalate, which is **poisonous in large doses**. The stems contain a lower concentration of oxalate, and also act as a good laxative. *Some foods we never meant for human consumption, and rhubarb is at the top of that list. The proof: it either poisons you or makes you crap your pants.*

› Dahlia Rideout, “Ten Dangerous & Deadly Foods,” Divine Caroline, www.divinecaroline.com

› Ian Shaw, Is it Safe to Eat?: Enjoy Eating and Minimize Food Risks (Springer, 2005), 127.

32

FACT : Potatoes contain **toxic compounds called glycoalkaloids** that cannot be reduced in cooking. Consumption of high doses of glycoalkaloids can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and, in severe cases, death. *Death by potato. Still better than death by blowfish.*

- › Dahlia Rideout, “Ten Dangerous & Deadly Foods,” Divine Caroline, www.divinecaroline.com
- › Ian Shaw, *Is it Safe to Eat?: Enjoy Eating and Minimize Food Risks* (Springer, 2005), 127.

33

FACT : Apricot, cherry, and peach pits contain **cyanogenetic glycosides, which release cyanide**. It would take a huge dose to kill you, but there have been reports of children in Turkey suffering from apricot seed poisoning. *In case you needed another reason not to eat a peach pit. Imagine passing that thing.*

- › Dahlia Rideout, “Ten Dangerous & Deadly Foods,” Divine Caroline, www.divinecaroline.com
- › Y.H. Hui, R. A. Smith, and David G. Spoerke, *Plant Toxicants*, 2nd ed. (Marcel Dekker, 2001), 47.

34

FACT : Chocolate contains the alkaloid theobromine, which in **high doses can be toxic** to humans and in even small amounts can kill dogs, parrots, horses, and cats. *This means that despite its name, the Kit-Kat candy bar is not a recommended snack for your kittycat. I wonder how many cats have died because of this confusion.*

- › Dahlia Rideout, “Ten Dangerous & Deadly Foods,” Divine Caroline, www.divinecaroline.com
- › Lewis R. Goldfrank and others, *Goldfrank’s Toxicologic Emergencies*, 8th ed. (McGraw-Hill Professional, 2006), 993.

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FACT : If not processed properly, tapioca can be toxic; it is made from cassava root, which contains

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